

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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MISS LATIMER OF BRYANS.

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CHAPTER XXIX. AN ELDER BROTHER.

"BUT what a horrid, disgraceful girl!" cried Alice Nugent indignantly.

She had been listening with breathless interest in her own room before dinner to Otto's account of his discovery that afternoon, and of his interview with Arthur. It appeared that Arthur had flown into a furious passion, had used a good deal of strong language, had sworn that he would not endure to be followed and spied upon; had generally, in short, made a fool of himself. It was evident that if he had had to do with any one less cool and self-possessed than his brother, the scene might have had serious consequences. As it was, Otto had been in momentary fear that some servant might hear an angry voice and open the door, or that the rest of the party might come in while Arthur was still raging.

"I took it quietly," Otto said. "I merely said that, as he could not possibly mean anything serious, it was hard on the girl, not to mention the man she is engaged to. He told me that I knew nothing about it, but I fancy that I know more than he does. By degrees I calmed him down, and by the time we met you I don't think there was much to be noticed. Poppy is not very quick. Did you notice any signs of a recent breeze?"

"I thought he looked rather pale and sulky. Poppy, poor dear! she noticed nothing, I'm sure. She believes in him

ridiculously. As to me, you know I never idealised Arthur. He has always been spoilt beyond endurance, I think, and as for the sweetness of his temper, that only exists, I believe, when nothing goes against him. He is just like a child, very good as long as he has a supply of new toys. No, I am not one of dear Arthur's worshippers. Never was. This is serious, though, Otto. What are you going to do? That odious girl! Who could have guessed that she was lurking about the farm? And it was my fault, for I almost sent him back to look for you. Had you any kind of suspicion before?"

"Well, if I could have believed in such stupidity, I did not quite like the way he was absorbed in Miss Farrant's picture. I think he saw I did not, for he lost his temper a little then."

"You didn't tell me that."

"It was not worth repeating. After all, I knew very well that he was not over head and ears in love with Poppy. It was not very unnatural that he should admire somebody else. But to-day it seemed to me that things were going a little too far."

"I should think so. And the girl—she ought to be ashamed of herself—Poppy has done everything for her."

"I wonder why she accepted the artist—only the other day."

"As a blind, do you think? Otto, this is really dreadful. We are in the middle of a sensation novel. This dull old Bryans the scene of it all! It would be rather amusing if Arthur wasn't your brother, and if one wasn't so sorry for Poppy."

"Ah! It is real, not fictitious emotion," said Otto, who thought he knew a little about psychology.

He was pacing slowly up and down the room. Alice poked the fire and crouched

down before it, holding her head between her hands.

"What are you going to do?" she repeated presently.

"That is the question," said Otto.

"Am I going to do anything?"

"Don't you think you must?"

"Do you? Well, this is my view of the situation. Knowing Arthur to be an impulsive young ass, I suspect that he came here half bored and ready to pick up any amusement that might fall in his way. I feel a little sorry for the old chap, you know. He was almost made to propose to Poppy Latimer. Of course she is very nice, but ten Bryans Courts wouldn't have made me do it. Well, then this girl falls in his way—pretty and ignorant, and rather spoilt like himself. I don't believe it is so much her fault as his. She looks unhappy. To-day, even before I came upon them, she looked wretched. All the—well, the nonsense—was on his side."

"That is all very well," said Alice, with authority. "If she had been a nice girl, nothing of the sort could ever have been begun. And if she is unhappy, she ought to be."

"Well, that does not matter now. The question is this: am I bound to tell anybody? Arthur will be careful now, I expect. He flew into a rage, but he was heartily ashamed of himself all the time. He is weak and self-indulgent; but he is not quite such a fool, I think, as to face the idea of giving up everything for a girl like that. Am I to spoil all his prospects by breaking off his engagement? I tell you, I believe that that scene this afternoon will go far to bring him to his senses. What would my mother say, do you think?"

Alice rocked herself gently backwards and forwards, staring into the fire.

"Your mother! Poor thing! I should not like to tell her," she said. "All her beautiful house of cards—to be the puff of wind that topples it over! And she so happy and contented! No, my dear."

"Yes, it would be an awful business. But, after all, it would be Arthur's fault, not ours. Mother would have to bear it. She is not the centre difficulty. Ought Poppy to know?"

Alice's usual readiness had deserted her. She did not speak for a minute or two, then got up and walked across to the looking-glass, where she gravely examined a pair of scorched cheeks.

"I look as if I had been doing some-

thing wrong," she observed. "My dear Otto, you know all about it, much better than I can tell you. Some people would say you must do right, regardless of consequences. I believe they would tell you that you ought to tell some friend of Poppy's—her aunt, or Mr. Cantillon—and leave it in their hands and hers to do as they like. Well, that would mean no end of rage and scandal, and would completely spoil Poppy's happiness, even if she chose to stick to him, which she hardly could, I think. You have been saying yourself that you think he will show more sense in future. Let's hope he will. Poppy is very fond of him, poor soul, and I dare say he will be all right when he is married, and has more to think about. A smash now would be very hard on her. I should leave things alone for the present, I think. Time enough before the wedding for Arthur to hang himself, if he really can't help it. Pity the wedding can't be sooner."

"So I thought; but Miss Latimer has absurd ideas of a grand function down here."

"Yes, silly old thing. And now Poppy has arranged for these precious friends of hers to be married at the same time."

"You don't say so!" cried Otto, with a whistle of dismay.

"She has, indeed. She told me so. And to think how they will all hate it, except herself!" and Alice burst into an irresistible peal of laughter. "Well," she said, suddenly becoming grave again, "I am dreadfully sorry for her. Otto, how glad I am I was not an heiress, and that nobody made you marry me!"

"You would have had more sense than Poppy Latimer. You would never have looked at me. Now, little woman, do you know that we shall be late for dinner?"

Five minutes later, as they were going down together, he said to her:

"Then you think I am to hold my tongue?"

"For the present—yes," she answered decidedly.

About the same time Geoffrey Thorne was walking over to Church Corner. He had not, as yet, found his engagement a very dreadful thing to bear. Maggie liked him, and when they were together alone, or with no witness but her grandfather, she put on a little playful manner which made intercourse pleasant and easy.

She chattered about nothing, teased him in a friendly way, and only seemed bored

by any attempt at demonstrativeness. Geoffrey troubled her little in that way.

Taking up his life with a sort of dogged resignation, he did not find things so very bad. They improved after the first day, when the sight of Miss Latimer with Maggie in the garden had almost taken away his power of speech. After that he avoided any chance of meeting her. His own relations behaved well and kindly; his father was ready to make every allowance for old Mr. Farrant's oddities, and Lucy—for this he was most grateful, and she knew it—soon made up her mind to accept the inevitable, went to see Maggie, asked her to the farm, and treated her with a rough, indulgent good nature, all for Geoff's sake.

That afternoon, when he came in from hunting, she told him that Maggie had been there, and then she told him about the visit of Miss Latimer and her friends; and then, being resolved to keep nothing from Geoffrey, she told him how Captain Nugent had wandered off on the pretext of meeting his brother, how he had been a long time gone, and then how, when he joined them with his brother, he had looked extremely queer.

"I don't know if he overtook Maggie," said Lucy in her downright way. "Cook said she heard voices in the front room; she thought they were the two gentlemen, waiting for us."

"I thought you said that Maggie went away without seeing them?"

"Yes—but it is just possible that Captain Nugent caught a glimpse of her through the window as they drove up. The ladies did not; but he came to the pony's head. I looked at that brother of his," said Lucy, "but he has one of those foxy faces that tell one nothing. I hardly know which of them I dislike most."

Geoffrey asked no more questions, but he went in the evening to Church Corner.

He met the old man in the passage, slowly hobbling towards the stairs.

"It's you, Geoffrey, is it?" said Mr. Farrant. "Well, how d'ye do, and good-bye. I'm off to bed, as tired as a dog. Maggie has gone up to see that my room is all right. She'll be down directly."

"Can I help you upstairs?" said the young man.

"Ay, you may as well." As they slowly mounted, he muttered in Geoffrey's ear: "Was your sister very hard on her to-day? She came in crying. I'm tired of asking what's the matter, so I'm going

to bed. Can't stand these tempers. See if you can bring her to reason."

Having helped him upstairs, Geoffrey ran down again and waited for Maggie in the parlour. He stood and looked round him with eyes that did not, however, take in much. In his mind there was an odd mixture of anger, resolution, and gentleness. He was not accustomed to being beaten, he told himself, and he did not mean to be beaten again. He meant to keep what he had got. He hated Arthur Nugent with the most cordial strength. He had borne his success with Poppy Latimer. That was likely and reasonable, and she cared for him. But that he should choose to amuse himself, in spite of all honour and good feeling, by carrying on a flirtation with this unhappy girl—and even now in spite of her engagement—was too much. No man could be expected to bear it. Sometimes Geoffrey knew quite certainly in his own mind that the village gossip had been true; and Lucy knew that he knew it; but she had forced herself to agree with him in laying the blame chiefly if not entirely on Captain Nugent. She only divined her brother's thoughts, for after his engagement he made it plain that he would not discuss the subject.

Geoffrey was still standing in front of the fire, waiting, when Maggie came slowly and unwillingly into the room. There were traces of tears on her face; she was flushed and her eyes were heavy; all her playfulness and brightness had departed. She came up to Geoffrey in a careless, mechanical way, and perhaps felt the sternness in his eyes, though she would not lift hers to meet them.

"What is the matter with you?" he said abruptly. "Your grandfather says you have been crying all the evening. Tell me, Maggie; I have a right to know."

"Don't be cross with me!" murmured Maggie, and tears sprang again, shining on her eyelashes.

"I am not cross with you. Whose fault is it—Lucy's or mine? I am sorry I was not at home this afternoon."

"No, it's not your fault. Lucy was very nice to me—only I wish you would let me know when you are going out hunting."

"I will another time," Geoffrey said.

His feeling about her had been from the first more like anxiety than anger, and now in her presence not a trace of sternness could hold its own. The troubled face was so pathetic and so young.

"Something is wrong," he said, after a pause, during which she sat down in her own little chair and dried her eyes. "I can't bear to see you like this. Is it our engagement that worries you?"

"Do you want to give me up? You well may," the girl answered hastily.

Geoffrey saw that she was strangely excited, as well as unhappy. He looked at her steadily. He thought for the moment, forgetting all other considerations, that he would go straight to Captain Nugent and have it out with him. Then, the first impulse of anger past, his thoughts became quieter. He would do nothing in a hurry. Any indignation for himself, too, must come second to the duty of helping her.

Sitting in a tall chair close beside her, he leaned forward and laid his hand lightly on her shoulder.

"Look here, Maggie," he said, "something has happened this afternoon to worry you. You can't get it out of your head, but that's because you are forgetting something else."

"What am I forgetting?"

"Only a thing which ought to stand between you and worries. Only me, dear."

It might have been the sympathy of an unselfish friend, so true, calm, and unexaggerated.

"I wish you belonged to me," the girl said, after a moment of passionate silence, during which both could almost hear the beating of their hearts.

"Don't I?" said Geoffrey.

"Oh, not like this! I wish you were my brother—or a girl."

Geoffrey smiled faintly to himself, looking down on the bent dark head so near him.

"What would you do if I were your brother—or a girl?"

"Perhaps I might be able to tell you, then. Do you see how dreadfully lonely I am?" she broke out rather breathlessly. "And can you imagine what it is to have to go through fire, with nobody to save one? To love the fire, too!"

"Suppose you don't talk in parables?" Geoffrey said very gently. "I will promise you this; if you will trust me, and tell me all about it, I will behave exactly as your brother would, if you had one, or possibly better."

"I think you are the best man that ever lived."

"No; I am an uninteresting old elder brother."

"But you—— No, of course I can't tell you. What nonsense, Geoffrey! How can you expect it? You, of all people in the world. Why, you might be so furious. You might kill me!"

"Or myself, perhaps!"

She turned round suddenly and looked at him. He was sad enough, nervous enough, but he was smiling, and his good dark eyes met hers calmly and bravely.

"Ah, no!" she said; "you wouldn't care enough for that."

She flung herself back in her chair, and stared at the fire silently for some time. He was impatient, but did not show it.

"I cannot tell you," she said at last. "The dreadful thing is that I should like to be good, and can't. Do you know, there is a person in this world who takes away all my senses. When I see him I go mad. That is the only way to understand it. I couldn't have believed it possible that I should ever listen to him at all, and yet I do, and when I do, I love it. One moment it is happiness and the next it is misery. It is fearfully wicked. I am perfectly heartless and ungrateful, I am false to my friends, I am a beast and a wretch. He has got this power over me, and it is half my life. I can't escape, I'm not sure that I want to—and yet—oh, yes, I do! indeed I do."

"Yes; and you saw him this afternoon?"

"Yes; and what frightens me so dreadfully is, that Mr. Otto Nugent came down the garden just at that moment and found us. That is the awful part of it. He will tell everybody, don't you think so? And what will happen then?"

Geoffrey turned white and bit his lips. This was indeed a terrible dilemma. And he could not, try as he would, keep a certain hardness out of his voice when he spoke to her again.

"Now that I know this, Maggie, I must ask for something more. It will be best for yourself and for every one else. You must tell me the whole story, when you first met Captain Nugent in this way, how many times you have met him—the whole truth, in fact."

Maggie looked round, pale and frightened, starting up from her chair.

"You are angry—you are unkind——" she began.

"No," Geoffrey said. "Sit down again. I am not reproaching you. You have been very foolish, of course—but I am thankful

that you have told me. As for him——" he stopped short.

"You will not speak to him?"

"Not unless I am obliged to do so. I will wait to see what Mr. Otto Nugent does. You will give me your promise never to meet him or listen to him again, and I shall be guided by circumstances."

"You are very angry. You will let it out—you will tell somebody. Oh, why did I trust you!"

"Because you knew that you could," Geoffrey answered. "And it is not only for your sake, remember, that I must be careful. Think of Miss Latimer."

His eyes flashed. Maggie, staring at him, thought she had not known that he could look so handsome or so angry. She hid her face in her hands.

"Don't you suppose that that is half the misery?" she whispered.

Then his gentleness returned; and presently she found herself telling him all he wanted to know, more freely, and also more truly, perhaps, than if he had been her brother or a girl.

It was a strange hour that they passed together there in the old room, while the fire died down, and a low wind moaned in the windows. But Geoffrey thought better of his poor little fiancée when he went out into the darkness.

What would Arthur Nugent's brother choose to do? What did Geoffrey wish him to do? He almost thought, now, that Poppy should be released from that man whatever it might cost her. This, however, was no business of his. His business was to protect Maggie, and by some quieter means than horsewhipping Arthur Nugent. That he felt tolerably sure of being able to do.

It was characteristic of Geoffrey that with the whole truth clear to him, and his vaguest suspicions too fully confirmed, he had no thought of saving himself from future complications by breaking off his engagement and leaving the country.

He had taken up his burden and would carry it to the end. The securing of Poppy's happiness, it is true, began to seem a doubtful thing; it was so very plain now that the man she loved was not and never could be worthy of her. Yet in one way, Geoffrey's new discoveries comforted him a little. It was a great thing to have gained Maggie's full confidence, and to be sure of having some kind of influence over her. He was not altogether sorry, when he thought it over, that Otto Nugent should

be aware of his brother's way of amusing himself. It would certainly be the interest of the Nugents to bring Arthur to his senses by one means or another.

Geoffrey told Lucy nothing, and was so unresponsive that she could not ask much. On Sunday it was a relief that the Nugents were not seen at church, Poppy and her aunt being alone together. Both faces, it seemed to Geoffrey as he looked at them, expressed a serene and peaceful happiness. A soft ray of December sunshine fell through one of the dim old windows on Poppy's head, lighting up her "fair hair and silver brows" with the radiance that might belong to a saint. Geoffrey gazed, forgetting where he was, remembering that evening in the church porch at Herzheim, when she stood in the sunset light with a shadowy background of painted martyrs, faint and vague, her grey eyes softly dreaming in the first presence of all that was to follow. Geoffrey gazed till his lady turned her head a little and looked at him. Then his eyes fell, and when he lifted them again it was to fix his whole attention on the Rector.

Mr. Cantillon was not quite like himself that day. He was less calm than usual, and yet more solemn, less unconscious; and yet the more sensitive and understanding of his hearers could feel that with a slight sense of effort there was something unusually exalted, some kind of triumph, some new wonder of thankfulness, under the hardly perceptible agitation of his look and voice.

Of course it was only Fanny Latimer and Poppy who really understood him. The other person who loved him best, Geoffrey, could only feel that he was a little strange, that there was something; and Geoffrey, unable to imagine any subject of deep excitement in Bryans except that of which his own thoughts were full, suspected that the Rector knew everything.

This suspicion took him to the Rector's house that afternoon. If he really knew, the temptation to share the anxiety, the responsibility, was irresistible.

He came in and found Mr. Cantillon pacing up and down his study, an unusual sign of restlessness. He received Geoffrey with a smile of such sunny happiness, with such a new brightness in the eyes that searched his face in a kind of affectionate curiosity, that the young man, whose thoughts were full of tragedy and difficulty, hardly knew how to look at him,

and felt a confusion which Mr. Cantillon seemed to see and understand. For he only smiled more.

"How's this, my dear Thorne?" he said gently, after a moment's hesitation. "I believe somebody has told you."

It did not occur to Geoffrey that there might be more than one thing to be told. A wild sequence of ideas chased each other through his brain. Was it all broken off? Were the whole Nugent family gone for good? Had she not cared for him after all? Was the Rector so much pleased that he could smile over the catastrophe which struck even Geoffrey as under any circumstances painful?

"You are glad, sir? But I don't quite know," he muttered, staring. "She was too good," and his voice failed entirely.

"Too good!" repeated the Rector, still smiling. "Too good to waste her life any longer; however, that may be a selfish view. I thought you knew, Geoffrey; I saw it in your face. Now, may I ask who told you?"

"I had some reason for thinking—a slight suspicion," Geoffrey stammered out.

"Had you—had you really?" said the Rector, with a touch of sharpness. "I wonder how such a report can have got abroad?"

"In a village like this things are always——" Geoffrey found something in his manner which bewildered him more and more.

Now his face suddenly cleared up, and the happy smile returned.

"Well, Thorne; well, won't you congratulate me? The village has no business to think anything of the kind; but I can't be very angry with it, or with anybody else."

"I suppose we ought all to congratulate ourselves?"

"Yes, you ought—but me first of all." He stopped for a moment, his eyes wandering away to the photograph on his writing-table. "Great changes in Bryans!" he said. "But happiness may come to the old, you see, as well as to the young. Of course we shall wait till after—— By-the-by, is it true that your wedding is to be on the same day as Miss Latimer's?"

"I believe she wishes it to be so," Geoffrey answered absently.

He had no wish to enter on that painful subject now. Following the Rector's eyes, he had suddenly come to understand, and at the bottom of his heart he was sorry, for he did not love Miss Fanny Latimer.

But no one who loved the Rector could refuse to rejoice in his joy. Geoffrey only wondered a little that his preoccupied thoughts had never read the story told by that picture in the study, and by a thousand other little signs, no doubt, to eyes that had intelligence.

"I wish you every happiness," he said; and the earnestness of his tone satisfied the Rector, who at this moment was little troubled by outside things.

Geoffrey soon went away, smiling rather bitterly, and chopping at the heads of the grass on his road. All was unchanged it seemed. Otto Nugent had said nothing; therefore he could say nothing; and Arthur Nugent, Maggie's lover, would one of these days be Porphyria's husband and master of Bryans. So earth arranges its matters, and heaven does not interfere.

A LONG CAPTIVITY.

It is not often that we have the opportunity of reading the inner history of revolt and war in savage lands, written by an eyewitness of most of the events. Such a book,* however, we have before us now, telling us the fatal history of the revolt of the Mahdi against Egyptian rule, and the horrible results thereof. Major Wingate tells the story in Father Ohrwalder's own words, having not only had a rough translation of his manuscript before him, but also having had many personal interviews with him for official purposes—Major Wingate being Director of Military intelligence, Egyptian Army. Kordofan, it may be remarked before proceeding with the story, is a district lying to the west and south-west of Khartum.

Father Ohrwalder and his party left Cairo in December, 1880; on the fourth of January they landed at Sawakin; and, journeying by Berber, arrived at Khartum in twenty-eight days. After a short stay at Khartum, the journey was continued to El Obeid, towards the western boundary of Kordofan, under the escort of Slatin Bey, who had just been appointed Governor-General of Darfur, a district beyond Kordofan. At El Obeid Father Ohrwalder, being bound further on, left his party and pursued his way to Delen, a place in Dar

* "Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp—1882-1892." From the original manuscript of Father Joseph Ohrwalder, late priest of the Austrian Mission Station at Delen, in Kordofan. By Major F. R. Wingate, R.A. Sampson Low, Marston and Co.

Nuba, which is a district to the south-west of Kordofan, where was his mission station, and where he arrived on the fifth of December, 1881. Here he found the country rich and fertile, well-wooded and well-watered, and abounding in game; while the people were pleasant and well-disposed, industrious and happy. Here he lived, working happily and contented under his superior, Father Bonomi, until April, 1882, when the first murmurs of the storm which was to overwhelm the Sudan were heard at Delen.

For some time past a Dervish had been tramping the country, striving by the force of religious fanaticism to arouse revolt. Undisturbed by the Government, he collected a small body of followers and openly set up the banner of revolt. He was then invited to go and see the Governor-General of Khartum, and, upon his refusal, a very few troops were sent to take him, but were defeated owing to carelessness of their officers, and very few escaped alive. Meanwhile the Dervish Mohammed Ahmed—whom we know as the Mahdi—retired to Gedir, in Dar Nuba, awaiting developments on the part of the Government. While the Mahdi was at Gedir, his reputation as a miracle-worker grew, and numbers flocked to his standard, including a great many who did not believe in his miracles—namely, the slave merchants. This belief in the Mahdi's miraculous power was by no means decreased by a victory he obtained over an Egyptian force led on by Rashid Bey, whose troops were led into an ambush, and defeated and massacred, with hardly any loss at all on the part of the Dervishes. Another Egyptian force was massacred on the seventh of January, 1882, and the Mahdi, having increased so in power, determined to besiege El Obeld; various military stations in Kordofan having in the meanwhile fallen into his hands, the garrisons having been massacred with terrible atrocities. Here is the description of the Mahdi. "His outward appearance was strangely fascinating; he was a man of strong constitution, very dark complexion, and his face always wore a pleasant smile, to which he had by long practice accustomed himself. Under this smile gleamed a set of singularly white teeth, and between the two upper middle ones was a V-shaped space, which in the Sudan is considered a sign that the owner will be lucky. His mode of conversation, too, had by training become exceptionally pleasant and sweet. As a messenger of God, he

pretended to be in direct communication with the Deity. All orders which he gave were supposed to come to him by inspiration, and it became therefore a sin to refuse to obey them; disobedience to the Mahdi's orders was tantamount to resistance to the will of God, and was therefore punishable by death." He appointed three Khalifas under him, who were in reality his Generals; he devised a strict military organisation, and formulated a severe code of laws, in his character of religious reformer. All these reforms were brought about while he was in Gedir, from whence he set out to besiege El Obeld, which was defended by Said Pasha.

Meanwhile, the little party of missionaries at Delen were without any certain news, the only sure sign that something was wrong being the renewed activity of the slave-dealers, and of a tribe called the Baggara, who had joined the revolt and made frequent raids on the Nubas, but who were eventually repulsed. For five months they lived thus in the midst of alarms, and cut off from communication with the outer world, when, early in September, the Mahdi, having quitted Gedir, despatched a party under Mek Omar to take possession of Delen. The anxious party here determined upon flight to Fashoda, when Mek Omar made his appearance. Preparations for the flight were made, the fighting force consisting of eighty Remingtons belonging to the soldiers, in addition to the thirty rifles of the mission party, but, by the cowardice or unreadiness of the captain of the troops, when the appointed time came, at the dead of night, it was found that he had given no orders to his troops, that they were all asleep, and that the opportunity was gone. In the morning the soldiers went over to Mek Omar, and the mission party—two hundred in all, mostly women and children—were left alone, and on the fifteenth of September, 1882, were taken prisoners by the Mahdi's men. For three days they stayed on at Delen, and on the eighteenth set out for El Obeld, four animals being provided for the little party of Europeans, the Sisters riding, and Father Bonomi, Father Ohrwalder, and the two lay brethren taking it in turns to walk and ride. Whenever they reached a village they were treated with scorn and insults; they were constantly searched, in hopes that something of value might be found upon them, and had they not been carefully guarded by the escort they would have been killed. Thus they approached

El Obeid, which was being besieged by the Mahdi, the town itself having surrendered, while the garrison carried on a most obstinate defence. El Obeid was a large and prosperous town, with one hundred thousand inhabitants, and a large trade in grain, ostrich feathers, tamarinds, and skins of animals.

In one assault the Mahdi retired with a loss of ten thousand men, and had only Said Pasha had the pluck to pursue, he might have then and there completely routed the enemy; but more cautious counsels prevailed, and the garrison retained their quarters, and the Mahdi commenced a close blockade. It was during the siege that the little party arrived at El Obeid, having been robbed of everything they possessed by their escort just before they reached the Mahdi's camp. Arrived at the camp weak and ill, they made every effort to obtain their freedom; but the Mahdi's answer was always the same: "At present the roads are dangerous, and I wish no harm to come upon you; when El Obeid has surrendered, we will permit you to go to your own country."

Meanwhile, the garrison at El Obeid were in terrible straits; all articles of food fetched enormous prices, and then failed altogether; deaths by starvation reached an appalling number, gum being the only food. Then arrived news of reinforcements from Khartum; but nothing came of it, and on the nineteenth of January, 1883, the brave garrison were forced to surrender, and the original mission party in the Mahdi's camp was reinforced by those members of the mission at El Obeid who had survived the siege, and here they remained in most miserable plight, ill-treated and in danger of death, their only hope being fixed on Khartum; but until the twenty-first of June, 1883, they had no certain news. On that day a message reached them to the effect that they were not to lose heart, and that in the winter a large army would advance against the Mahdi. The army was that unfortunate body of troops commanded by General Hicks. The story of their defeat and massacre is too well known to be repeated here, but a quotation from the diary of an Austrian officer which fell into Father Ohrwalder's hands is worth reproducing. These are the last words of the diary, and show how hopeless the expedition was from the quality of the soldiers, who were apparently not fit for the work, though their European officers led them bravely

enough. "These are bad times; we are in a forest, and every one very depressed. The General orders the bands to play, hoping that the music may enliven us a little; but the bands soon stop, for the bullets are flying from all directions, and camels, mules, and men keep dropping down; we are all cramped together, so the bullets cannot fail to strike. We are faint and weary, and have no idea what to do. The General gives an order to halt and make a zareba. It is Sunday, and my dear brother's birthday. Would to Heaven that I could sit down and talk to him for an hour! The bullets are falling thicker. . ." This ends the diary, and surely makes an awful picture, fit prelude to the annihilation which followed.

It was on the ninth of November that the unfortunate captives received the news, and all their hopes were dashed to the ground. It was clear that the Government could not help them, and that Khartum must look to its own safety, for the Mahdi was master of almost the entire Sudan. But even now the hopes of the captives were raised once more by the news that Gordon Pasha had arrived in Khartum and been enthusiastically received; but the fact that Gordon was alone increased the Mahdi's courage, and he determined to advance on Khartum. It was then that the captives at last resolved to try and escape. They succeeded in procuring a guide and camels, when they were separated and handed over to different masters, and exposed to ill-treatment and insults from every side, until on the seventh of April, 1884, the Mahdi set out for Khartum. Father Ohrwalder was made over to another master, and with him went to Rahad. On the journey he had to walk and act as camel driver. "The burning sun and fatigue were terribly oppressive, and it is always a wonder to me how I escaped sunstroke. As for food, I had a share of my master's horses' food." The journey took three days, and Father Ohrwalder arrived with feet swollen and blistered by the burning sand. Here he was made over to a new master, and had several interviews with the Mahdi. All the time his existence was most miserable. His bed was the ground, and his roof the sky. Every morning he had to shake the scorpions out of his clothes; and he was unable to eat during the day, for, he says, he would have eaten as many flies as food. This went on till

towards the end of June, when he received letters from Khartum from the Austrian Consul.

"We hope that the English will energetically push forward into the Soudan, or we shall be lost. Our condition is desperate."

The date of this letter is January, 1884. This mention of troops from England lit another small ray of hope in the midst of the darkness of Father Ohrwalder's life. His condition at this time was indeed wretched. "The state of moral darkness in which we lived, the constant insults, being gazed upon by such multitudes, being at the mercy and sport of these savages, just as if I were a monkey or other curious animal, all had a dulling effect on one's spiritual nature, and I felt that I must be losing my mind; but yet in all these trials and afflictions God did not leave us. Again a ray of hope shone through the obscurity."

The next event in the history is the siege and fall of Khartum. This, being well known to all of us, may be left untold, except to point out that Father Ohrwalder lays great stress on the fact that Khartum, had it not been for treachery, could have held out for very much longer—the inhabitants were living almost luxuriously compared to the unfortunate garrison of El Obeid—and he further expresses his belief that had Gordon been accompanied by even a single company of British soldiers the moral effect would have been so great that such treachery could not have existed. The scenes of massacre and cruelty which were enacted after the capture of the town seem to have been indescribable, and that twenty-sixth of January, 1885, may well rank with the most awful days of bloodshed in the world's history. On the twenty-eighth the steamers were observed making their way up the Nile; the English had arrived, but quickly discovered they were too late, turned back, and disappeared. Thus the whole of the Sudan was in the power of the Mahdi, and the unfortunate captives had no prospect before them but captivity, till death—either from natural causes or at the hands of their masters—should put an end to their sufferings.

After the fall of Khartum the Mahdi gave himself up to a life of luxury, living on the fat of the land, while he, at the same time, urged moderation in eating and drinking in others. But this life did not suit him, and falling sick he became

dangerously ill, and on the twenty-second of June, 1885, he died. His death must have been a terrible shock to his followers, in whose eyes he was sacred and immortal, but, contrary to what might have been expected, no great split took place, and Khahfa Abdullah, who assumed the lead, was acknowledged as the Mahdi's successor without any trouble.

Father Ohrwalder's comments on what this man had done are not without interest as showing how all the troubles arose from him, and him alone. "Thus ended the Mahdi—a man who left behind him a hundred thousand murdered men, women, and children, hundreds of devastated towns and villages, poverty and famine. Upon his devoted head lies the curse of his people whom he had forced into a wild and fanatical war, which brought indescribable ruin upon the country, and which exposed his countrymen to the rule of a cruel tyrant, from whom it was impossible to free themselves."

With the death of the Mahdi our interest in the course of events in the Sudan naturally grows less, as the history of them afterwards is only one of petty frontier wars and internal squabbles which went to consolidate Abdullah's power. The only interest we have is to follow as closely as we can—for during this period Father Ohrwalder does not tell us as much as we should like about himself—the European captives.

When the Mahdi left Rahad, Ohrwalder was handed over to another master, Sherif Mahammed. He was at this time very ill, and had an attack of scurvy. Despite this he had to accompany his master to El Obeid, and a few days afterwards Father Bonomi was brought into El Obeid in chains, and lodged in the same tent as Ohrwalder, and it was here that they heard with despair of the death of Gordon and the fall of Khartum.

But Father Bonomi's day of delivery was fast approaching. It was on the fourth of June, 1885, that a man arrived, handing a note to Father Bonomi, and saying that a man had come to take him back to Dongola; but no mention was made of Father Ohrwalder. They went to the meeting-place arranged, and saw the man, who refused to take Ohrwalder, but promised to come back for him if he succeeded in getting Bonomi through. So there was nothing for Ohrwalder to do but to remain behind, and it must have been with a sad heart for himself that he

saw Bonomi start at dusk on the fifth of June, 1885. After a night of suspense lest Bonomi should be captured, he rose early and found no one, but he felt certain that Bonomi had been back. Six years afterwards he learnt that Bonomi had been unable to find the camels and guide, and had come back to find the man who had brought the note, that he might lead him to the guide. The escape was not discovered for four days, and then Ohrwalder said that the fugitive had gone to Khartum for some medicine. At El Obeid he was kept in the midst of disease and went through all the horrors of a revolt of blacks against the Dervishes, until the twenty-fifth of March, 1886, when he was permitted to go to Omdurman, and accordingly left El Obeid. "What a flood of recollections welled up in my mind as we marched for the last time through the desolate ruins of the city! How strange had been the vicissitudes of this once flourishing place during the last few years! From a thriving and peaceful township it had been transformed into the theatre of constant warfare and bloodshed. It had then been the scene of the Mahdi's debaucheries, when he had rested after his victories, and now it had dwindled down into a wretched village."

Omdurman was reached on the twenty-fourth of April, 1886, and they encamped close to the town. "A fearful sandstorm was blowing, and we were enveloped in clouds of dust—a fitting advent to the capital of the Mahdi's empire!" The next day they enter Omdurman, which seems to have become a centre of trade, the merchants being Greeks, Jews, and Syrians, who were doing a good trade, though coin was scarce and pieces of twilled cotton, manufactured in the Sudan, had been made currency.

From here to the end of the book Father Ohrwalder tells us hardly anything about himself, and we can only imagine from the slight glimpses we get what a wretched existence his must have been. In the course of his account of the Khalifa's attempt to invade Egypt, which ended in the victory of the Egyptians at Toski, he tells us that he often heard him say that if the English would only evacuate Egypt, he would very soon take possession of it. This victory also brought danger to the captives, for it seemed for a time quite possible that Abdullah would vent his anger on them, but the danger passed by as had so many others before. Then

a terrible famine fell upon Omdurman which swept off hundreds in its course, and then spread into the provinces, and still the captives lived on, keeping themselves as best they could, but although Ohrwalder gives us lifelike descriptions of life in the town, and accounts of the Khalifa's rule and exercise of justice, he still keeps himself in the background and his life is practically a blank until November, 1891, excepting that he tells us that the Sisters kept themselves by making clothes, while he, by himself, learnt the art of ribbon making.

The dresses of women in Omdurman were extensively ornamented with ribbons, and to make these ribbons Ohrwalder bought a small loom. But no one would teach him the art without the payment of much more than he could afford, so he carefully unravelled a piece of ribbon and studied the method of making it, and actually in that manner succeeded in his object, and made enough money to keep them alive. He tells us a little about his privations, but not much.

"For seven months we lived on dhurra bread and a few boiled vegetables, without oil, butter, or meat. Hard work and insufficient food were telling on our strength; however, we were far better off than hundreds of others, who were willing to work, but, finding nothing to do, were obliged to starve."

During all his long captivity thoughts of escape had never left the Father, and once in Omdurman he thought escape would prove easier, but although throughout the time he was there he tried to find a way, he always met with failure and disappointment. But in February, 1890, an Arab, Ahmed Hassan, came to him and asked him for a letter to his friends in Cairo. This Ohrwalder gave him, but it was not until the fifteenth of September, 1891, that Hassan set out from Cairo to Omdurman, the captives having given up all hope of him.

Meanwhile the condition of the captives had gone from worse to worse. Father Ohrwalder began to spit blood, felt severe pains in his chest, and was little more than skin and bone, while the Sisters were in even a worse plight. "The sad prospect of never regaining our liberty, of living a life of slavery, debarred from all the advantages and progress of the world, never again to worship in our grand churches, and enjoy the comforts of our holy religion; but to live and die amongst

the fiery rocks and sands of Omdurman, where the burning sun turned dead bodies into mummies—to die and be buried in slavery—the prospect of living was indeed unattractive, and what wonder we should long for death to free us from such misery!" On the fourth of October, 1891, one of the Sisters died, her body was carried from the town, and the few who were left returned to the town, longing for the time when they might be beside her. Surely a greater depth of misery and despair would be impossible to imagine.

But even now, when all seemed lost, help was near at hand. On the night of the twenty-eighth of October Hassan unexpectedly appeared. Ohrwalder took him to his tent. "After the usual Arabic greetings he said to him: 'Here I am; are you coming?'" Ohrwalder, seeing his release so near after so many disappointments, was for a moment speechless, but soon found tongue to enquire about the arrangements. The flight was to be made on camels, Hassan having been provided with one hundred pounds with which to purchase them—five in number. The camels were brought and preparation for the flight secretly made, the party not daring to trust any one, and the day gradually approached. "The day of our intended departure was approaching, and we looked forward to it with almost breathless impatience. We lost all appetite for food; fear, mental anguish, and the idea that we should be free, kept us in a perfect fever of excitement." On the twenty-seventh Ahmed came and appointed the next day for the attempt, and on that day Father Ohrwalder and the Sisters, stealing forth in the dusk, successfully made their escape from Omdurman. For three days they fled, without pursuit, and then the river had to be crossed, which, however, after some difficulty, was accomplished, and with wonderful good fortune, and hard riding, they journeyed on without visible pursuit or difficulty with the people whom they met. Their worst enemy was sleep. Try as they would, "the conversation would flag, and silence follow. The camels seemed to know their riders were asleep, and instinctively fell into a slower pace; the head kept nodding until it sunk upon the chest; with a sudden start, the equilibrium, which had been almost lost, would be recovered, and the sleep vanished." A trying flight for people strong and in good training, what must it have been for those

shrunk and emaciated by want and disease! But at last, on the seventh of December, the walls of the Egyptian fort at Murat were in sight, and the party who had gone through so much were in safety at last. For two days they rested, and then journeyed on gently to Cairo, which they reached on the twenty-first of December, 1891, eleven years after Father Ohrwalder had set forth from the city with such good hopes.

This for us ends this history of captivity and hardship, which it seems almost impossible for a man to have gone through, much less women. But it has the advantage of other romantic and seemingly impossible stories: it is true, and we can only recommend those who want to know more—and this is, of course, but a slight sketch—to read the book itself, and be interested and astonished.

"IN LOST PARK."

A WESTERN HOLIDAY.

It was a very curious-looking procession that started off from our ranch one day the end of June. First of all, and the cause of the expedition, were about sixty head of cattle, which were going to be taken for summer pasturage into one of the mountain parks of the Foot Hills of the Rockies, for now that all the snow had disappeared, except that which remained, year in, year out, on the great peaks of the Snowy Range, and the mountain passes were open, we were about to economise our own pastures for winter use, by taking our outfit of inside cattle into the mountains; and intended to camp out in "Lost Park" for two or three months.

After the "cow brutes" came four pack-horses, laden with our small tent and necessaries, such as hams, tied up in gunny-sacks, a large store of flour, and canned things, for up the Indian passes nothing in the way of wheels could get. Next in the cavalcade were our three riding horses, with our noble selves, the boys being most correctly attired à la cowboy, schappas, cartridge-belts, rifles—for they hoped for some sport—big hats and all.

I cannot say we looked very imposing, for the three horses were adorned with various useful, if not particularly ornamental, culinary articles, my poor Rorie having a frying-pan tied to his saddle, to say nothing of two gunny-sacks con-

taining loaves and soap; besides my comfort bed for sleeping in, which also answered the purpose of a trunk, rolled up lightly, and tied on to the Mexican saddle in two places with leather thongs, so as to make a nice rest for my back. We all used the saddles of the country, and most convenient we found them, whilst the many leather thongs stitched on to them at intervals were most useful for carrying things.

We set out on our long journey early in the morning, as it would be too hot to travel midday for any length of time, and it may be supposed that with the cattle our progress was but slow; the dogs gambolling round us in high glee. We had kept our destination a profound secret, as we had no wish, for the sake of our poor cattle who were but skin-poor after the severe winter, to share our camping-ground with anybody else's outfit; but we had determined to try for Lost Park; a mountain park which had but one opening into it, and was therefore, being difficult to hit, less of a favourite for a summer camping-ground than the better known ones. However, Jack had been there once before with a friend, and declared that he could find the place again, and we both of us believed thoroughly in Jack, and were prepared to follow him anywhere. As for me, I never said a word against any plan of the boys'; my only fear was lest they should think the life too rough for me and leave me behind, so I maintained a discreet silence and agreed to every word they said, meaning all the time to get my own way if I possibly could. It must not be thought that we were going to do anything out of the common—it was only what hundreds of ranch folk and their womenkind do every year of their lives, and think nothing of it—but I was a tenderfoot, and so afraid that the boys would think I could not manage it, and be a hindrance to them. I could ride, but I could not shoot one little bit, and it was not every brother out West who would put up with a girl on a mountain expedition who regarded a rattlesnake and a rifle with equal respect!

Lost Park itself was three days' journey, allowing for resting midday. We should have to camp out in the open that night, but we hoped to cross the Divide, and get as far as the Foot Hills, and make our camp by Bear Creek Canon, which we had to climb up the following morning; then, that night, we trusted to get into Berghum Park, where there was known to be a hunters' cabin, and plenty of water for

the "chores," as the inside cattle were not unfrequently called.

All that day we were in the saddle, from five in the morning till noon, when we rested by West Plum Creek, just over the Divide, and had a meal and sleep, and were on the road again by four o'clock. It was half-past seven when we camped for the night at the foot of Bear Canon, and lit our fire. We were very tired, cattle and all, but after a good wash in the creek, felt refreshed and quite ready for supper, which consisted of fried ham and tomatoes, bread and butter, and coffee. All our cows except one were dry, and the long journey having a bad effect on this poor creature, we had to take to canned milk, and got quite to like the flavour of it; indeed, I used to eat it on bread as long as the bread lasted. Supper and a smoke finished, we began to settle things for the night—the first night I had ever passed out of doors. The boys took the saddles off the horses and picketed them out not far from the fire, then they collected all the dry wood they could find by it, and lastly cut branches of scrub oak and pine, and put them at the head of each of our sleeping bags to lay our pillows on. The camp fire was built up high, its heart being composed of a great log of pitch-pine, which flared up brightly whenever fresh wood was thrown upon it; and as most of the wood was cedar, it may be supposed that the burning branches gave forth a very pleasant smell. We had our sleeping bags arranged with feet towards the fire, and then we all took off our boots and went to bed.

The boys, who had often slept in the open before, were asleep in a few moments, breathing very firmly and with great regularity; but for me it was a different matter; we had not had time to unpack our tent, and it took some days before I got into the knack of partially undressing inside a sleeping bag; for, of course, it was no rest if you went to sleep with all your clothes on.

In fact, I discarded one tight article of clothing for the trip, and merely took for overwear a blue serge shirt, and a couple of white silk blouses which I could wash out in the creeks; this, with a shady hat and gauntlet gloves, completed my exterior adornment. For the rest I wore my riding trousers, and Jäger underwear, and never suffered from a chill, though I was often wet to the skin. My habit

itself I found would have been sadly in the way, but I clung to the other portions of my riding attire, and found them as comfortable for climbing as for the saddle. I thought, tired as I really was, that I never should get to sleep that night, and envied the boys snoring away by my side, and only awaking to fling a fresh log on the fire; it was no novelty to them. All was very still and restful; there was little moon as yet, but the stars shone brightly overhead, the hills, and even the sleeping horses, taking strange and fantastic shapes in the indistinct light. A coyote howled from the plains below, a hawk or two would sometimes skim across the sky, and once, in the far distance, high up amongst the Foot Hills, I heard the shrill shriek of a mountain lion. I took out my watch; it was now two a.m. Miles and miles off in a country rectory they were awaking to a new day; and deep in reflection I must have fallen asleep, for when I awoke it was four o'clock and broad daylight. The boys were up and dressed, even their beds packed up, and they advised me to go and have my tub whilst they took the horses to water further down the creek.

"You will find a nice bathing-hole there," said Jack, pointing right ahead. "Be quick, there's a good girl; we want breakfast!"

So they departed, and I went to my green dressing-room, and once down its bosky banks, with the willows and cotton-woods meeting overhead, I was as much alone as in my own room at home, though I will own it took me a little time to realise the fact. The water was icy cold, running down as it always did from the mountains, and I had a lovely bath, and having finished my toilet, returned to find the ham frying and the coffee made, and quite ready we were for them, too. I am ashamed to think of all I ate on that expedition, quite as much as the boys, and the food was not always as varied as one could wish either.

By five o'clock we were in saddle and commencing our toilsome ascent up the Indian trail of the Canon. It was a climb, too; the cattle did not much like it, and after an hour the horses' scinges had to be loosed, and every three minutes they had to be turned sideways to get their breath. We were at such an altitude that it was quite painful to hear them panting. The trail, too, was a dreadful one; I know I often felt fairly frightened, though I would

not have said that I was not thoroughly enjoying it for worlds, and presently we came to a part where the track was composed of loose rolling stones and gravel, for about a quarter of a mile. Here the boys took the reins out of my hands and knotted them up, and told me that I must hold on to my saddle-horn as best I could. In vain did I beg to be taken off Rorie's back and allowed to walk; they only cruelly laughed, gave him a slap, and the brave little beast plunged on, and whenever we saw room enough to turn the ponies and give them a breather, we would bend over and touch their necks with the reins on whichever side there was room to turn. They understood the signal well enough, that being the way you turn them when cow-punching. You usually also speak their name encouragingly at the same time, saying, "Hoo-oo oo, Rorie." That climb, we all thought, reflected great credit upon dear Rorie, but it took a great many "Hoo's" and encouraging words to get our whole cavalcade over the first spurs of the Foot Hills, and down into Berghum Park, where we were to pass the night; and when ourselves and the packs were off they were streaming with heat, and their poor flanks heaving to such an extent that I thought they would certainly "go up."

"Looks as if they'd been 'loosed,'" said Jack, as we all turned to to rub them down a bit, and upon my asking what that meant he told me. Loco, it seemed, was a grass found sometimes on the prairie, which the horses eat with avidity once they come across it, and will touch nothing else. It has, however, very dangerous properties, for after feeding upon it the horses go off by themselves and mope, and have, moreover, wrong ideas of distance and size, and will lift their legs on walking over a small branch as if it were the trunk of a great tree; they fall into profuse sweats and walk round and round in circles, and in time it kills them; having much the same effect upon horses as opium has upon human beings. So pernicious is it that a good many dollars are offered for a pound of it in South Colorado. It is green all through the winter, and has a small pink blossom, but strangely enough, although it has been analysed, no trace of poison can be found, and it is thought that some insect that feeds upon it alone must contain the venom.

I listened to this tale of Jack's with great respect. It only seemed right and fitting that these wonderful prairies, stretch-

ing for hundreds of miles on either side, should contain herbs and grasses, the properties of which were unknown to us; indeed, I myself, after rain, had smelt a thousand aromatic perfumes arising from the grass at my feet, not one of which could be traced to a flower, and also found quantities of a herb resembling in taste and smell wormwood, which in England I had only found growing wild on the walls of an old Roman city in Hampshire.

Berghum Park, where we had camped, was a large plateau tucked away in the intercesses of the Foot Hills, and had been much thought of in time past as a winter resort for big game; hence the log shanty, which had been given up to me for the night. In the days when bear and elk had been plentiful there, the hunters had thought nothing of shutting themselves up in the different parks that abounded in the Foot Hills in the fall of the year. It was a lonely life, for with the big snows the passes were closed till the following spring, but they were repaid for the hardships of it by the pelts of the wild creatures that fell victims to their skill. But now increased civilisation had driven the big game further afield, and the shanty was only used as a shelter for cattle-men taking their "cow brutes" to summer pasture. It was of the oldest and roughest description, the furniture consisting of a frame bedstead and a rusty stove, and all around the walls were scribbled messages, written by the "boys" to any of their friends who might follow. One inscription was "from Ned to Dick," "Meet me in Perry Park," another: "We are all dog-gone tired." I sympathise deeply with that, and another, which it is to be hoped for his peace of mind, Mr. "Nat," whoever he might be, did not see: "You bet your bottom dollar, Nat's a galoot."

The park itself was good enough, plenty of grass for the cattle quite three feet high, a trout stream running through it, edged with the usual willow and cottonwood trees, wild flowers blooming everywhere, and air that was like drinking champagne, whilst there was plenty of small game to be got. But we were all too tired that night to think much of the beauties of nature, and after supper and a good wash tumbled off to bed. But in my case, alas! not to sleep. No sooner was the light gone, than countless insects awoke from their winter fast, and proceeded to make a meal off me. I struck a match; there they were in hundreds, crawling

out of the old logs, crawling out of the bedstead, crawling—ah me!—over my bedding. There was no help for it, although I had, tired as I was, taken the trouble to lay bits of cedar under the rugs; it was foolish, knowing how the wretched things abound in the old log houses, not to have slept in the open, but the treat of a room where one could really undress had been too much for me. So I vacated my state apartment, and awoke the boys, and we put all the bedding in the creek with big stones on it till the morning, and they gave up one of their bags to me, and I soon went to sleep. Otherwise I did not receive much sympathy, and the boys roared as they listened to my "tale of woe" next morning, but as they explained that the insects in question never troubled them, I forgave their laughter, for no one who has not experienced the small misery of being tortured by these repulsive brutes can understand what it really is.

We were up betimes in the morning to dry the bedding, but owing to the fact that the full warmth of the sun did not reach us, tucked inside the mountains as we were, till half an hour after he arose, it was five o'clock before we started. This time, too, it was not such straightforward travelling, for the trail led up in zigzag fashion along the spur of the next hill. Up and up we went, till we got at last amongst the dead timber, and here and there, growing out of the great bare boulders, grew brilliant patches of the bright blue gentian; and green fronds of a sort of mountain maiden-hair peeped out. I wanted very much to stop and gather some, but the boys would not hear of resting yet; indeed, Jack was looking anxiously about, and he said afterwards he was afraid he had lost his way. The sun, too, was gaining in power, and the tongues of the poor animals were hanging out with heat, and their sides heaving with the exertion. At last, far ahead it seemed, where the trail ended, rose a solid wall of bare rock, quite six feet high, and I called out that there was no more path—we would have to retrace our steps. I was so tired, too, and ready, but for very shame, to cry at the idea.

But I was mistaken, mercifully, and we were now at the very summit of the mountain, and through what seemed solid rock there was really a track, along which we wound, Indian file. There were high walls of rock on each side of us, and the sun was right overhead. It was fearfully

hot, not a breath of air to be felt; the poor cattle began to feel the oppression of the atmosphere, and to moan piteously. As for me, I did not care—it seemed as if we had been years and years in this stony desert—till I heard the boys say triumphantly, "There, what do you think of that?" And I felt a cool breath of air blow upon my face, and looked up and found that our rocky road was gone, and that we stood on the other side of the mountain ready to begin our downward climb. Above us, as we looked up, the snowy peaks reared their heads into the sky, looking almost as if we might put out our riding-whips and touch them, and below was a great mass of misty cloud that hid all else.

"There—there is Lost Park," cried the boys, pointing downwards, and one congratulated the other upon being first on the feeding-ground, for not the print of a single hoof had been noticed up the trail.

"Nothing but mountain and cloud," I said despairingly. "There is no room for us down there; why, I could hit Pike's Peak with a stone."

"The effect of the rarity of the air," said Jack very contentedly. "Plenty of room down there;" and he lifted me off my saddle; then they gave a prolonged "Hoo-oo-oo!" and raised their black snakes; and we three human beings stood alone—horses, cattle, and all had disappeared in the white mist; and we could hear the clattering of their hoofs amongst the loose stones.

"They will get on better without us," the boys explained, "as it's a tiny bit steep. So now, old girl, you must put in a bit of a scramble."

Certainly their ideas of a bit of a scramble were liberal ones; I don't know how we got to the bottom, but once through the cloud we saw, stretched before us, what looked like the very garden of Eden to my tired eyes, for down below lay a lovely green park, with trees waving in the breeze, and a cool stream meandering through it, gleaming in the sunlight; and the horses—oh, happy creatures!—already with their noses dipped into the water. Then all seemed easy and pleasant, with one of the boys holding my hand, and the other holding me up by the waistbelt, we plunged on, regardless of scratches in dress and hands, and gashes on one's strongest pair of boots; till we, too, like the cattle, were drinking our fill, and washing our faces, too exhausted even to explore our summer

residence. The boys had just energy enough left to take the packs and saddles off, and then, too tired for food, we lay down and slept for a couple of hours straight off.

We pitched our little tent close to the stream and chanced its booming. Something or the other always has to be chanced in a summer camp, and the fact that gave me the greatest happiness was that there was no fear of rattlesnakes in the Foot Hills, and that I could stroll about and gather flowers and berries without any fear of my natural enemy.

By supper-time we were nicely fixed up, had a good fire built, and some delicious mountain trout—which abounded so that one could catch sufficient for breakfast by wading in before one's bath—broiling in steaks on the top of the fire; and there I set to work to make flap-jacks, our future bread, all our loaves having given out. For the first week of them we thought we had never eaten anything so good, then we loathed them for a fortnight, and then endured them, for we had mountain appetites. After a while, too, I got quite clever at baking biscuits in a big iron pot, which made a nice change. As for the many birds the boys shot, why, I cooked them by a gipsy receipt I remembered reading of—rolled them in a thick mud paste, feathers, insides and all, and baked them under the ashes. It answered capitally. The bird came out of its mud shell, which was baked to a potsherd, perfectly cooked, with all its juices in, and the feathers and other débris remained in the coating of mud. Space presses, or I would like to give an account of the many mountain fruits, of our astonishment at finding the currants bigger than the gooseberries, and of the deliciously flavoured raspberries which grew in profusion all up the mountain-side, and of the bear and elk hunts the boys came in for.

We had the park all to our own outfit, too, all the time, bar the ghost of a murdered Indian, whose happy hunting-ground it had been; which was supposed to keep watch and ward, together with the spook of his murderer, who was punished for his crime by never being allowed to find his way out of the place; hence its name of Lost Park. But of this I can only speak from hearsay; we never were favoured with a sight of them. More fortunate than the hunter, however, we went out of the park in September brown and well, tea,

sugar, and candleless; but as far as looks went, different creatures, both the cattle and ourselves; the former, much to the joy of the boys, who wanted to trade some of them for Creede City lots, that town—now, alas, nearly washed away through the bursting of a cloud—being on the boom for gold.

For ourselves the mountain air and change of diet had done wonders. My cough had quite gone, and the boys had fattened nicely and felt, as they said themselves, very "fit." The poor horses were almost too fat to manage the homeward climb, indeed it was all they could do to carry the few things we had remaining. But the cattle outfits were the envy of every one who saw them, whilst the ten empty lard pails were full of mountain berries, to be made into jam for winter use, and the boys had proudly tied on to a saddle the skin of a gentleman, Bruin by name, who had given me a great fright by wishing to dispute the gathering of the berries.

WINTER SKETCHES IN NORWAY.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

"It will be cold," said the Captain of the Hull boat when we asked him, in the smoking-room of his steamer, about the weather on the Norwegian mountains in January. "It will be about as cold as you'll like it."

"But," protested my friend, "there is a great deal of exaggeration on the subject—at least, so I have been given to understand."

"Exaggeration, eh! They talk of the Gulf Stream. I suppose, sir, don't they? A rare sort of hot water arrangement that, for the inland parts of Norway! Why, bless my life, three weeks ago, what do you think happened to me on the way up to Trondhjem in this very boat? It never happened before, I will say that."

"What?" we both exclaimed, eager to hear yet another yarn from the teeming memory of this seasoned mariner. I suppose we smiled a little as we spoke, for certainly some of his narratives had been a trifle exacting.

"It is a true tale," said the Captain, twirling his moustache furiously.

"Of course it is—whatever it may be," I replied with promptitude. "But let us hear it."

"Oh, there's little enough of it. I was asleep in my cabin, you know, and as I

could trust my mate, I had undressed. Well, I woke, don't you know, and tried to hitch over on to the other side, but I couldn't do it. Why couldn't I do it, gentlemen? Because my nightshirt, gentlemen, was frozen fast to the side of my bunk. The moisture of my body had gone to ice. I had to tear myself free, just like ripping a paper bag!"

"Phew! And that in the face of the Gulf Stream?"

"Quite so. But come out on deck now. We are getting near some ticklish parts, I assure you."

We were the only cabin passengers, my friend and I. It was natural, therefore, that the Captain should treat us with more than common civility. He took us up to his particular perch on the quarterdeck, and showed us the glories of the Norwegian coast by winter starlight.

Now this is a pleasure that few visitors to Norway experience. In summer the nights are so trivial that they are little better than twilight. People do not know when to go to bed during the northern tourist season. Like northern vegetation, they then feel disposed to live at twice the rate of ordinary animated beings more to the south, and of course, the further they go to the north the less real are the nights.

"You are very fortunate," said the Captain, as we all three leaned against the iron railings, and looked at the wonderful scene. We were in a strait of star-illuminated still water, with mountains on either hand snow-clad to the base. The great shapes of the hills shone in the water like silvery shadows. The beams of the stars ran in long lines elsewhere in the tranquil pool—as it seemed to us. We made our way almost without a sound. There was neither current nor wave to oppose us in the least. The muffled throb of the boat's engine was well-nigh imperceptible as we leaned over the iced railings, and said all the complimentary things about the Norwegian winter that we could imagine.

High above us on one hand—terribly high it seemed to us—was a broad, intense white seam. This was a glacier of eternal snow, fathoms deep. In all the prospect we could see but one little twinkling yellow light—very different from that of the stars—betokening human habitation. It was hard, in this romantic mood, to think reasonably of the lives led by these isolated fisher-folk, hemmed in among the Norwegian waters by the huge mountain

shapes, which in winter were likely to be quite unscalable. The sparkle of the stars was singularly variegated; you could distinguish the colours of blue, pale green, radiant white, and daffodil yellow among them. It would not have interested me vastly to have heard a professor descant upon the metallic origin of these colours. I preferred to take them as they seemed—an infinity of rainbow-hued lamps pendent over our heads, providentially arranged to help us on our way to Bergen. They reminded me oddly of the illuminations at the last Paris Exhibition. It is a bald comparison, yet not so untrue as it may appear.

At the channel our Captain wished us to see, a gust of freezing wind blew down upon us from a rift in the mountains. We drew our coat collars tight to our ears, and watched. The snow-clad hills to the left parted and showed us a long silvery reach of water to the south-west. Beyond was the Atlantic. The ocean swell rose and fell methodically, unbroken. In the distance, also on the seaward side of us, was another island. For a few minutes we rolled gently. It was the motion of a gondola rather than of an ill-dispositioned ship. Then the faint light of a beacon house drew near, and soon the old conditions were again upon us—the placid water, sown with star-reflections, and the snow-covered mountains hanging over us to the right and left.

Had we been young ladies in the heyday of sentimentality we should, no doubt, have thought the steward a brutal Goth to ring the supper bell just when our rapture was at its keenest. But so did not we, for the icy air had given us better appetites than we had brought on board with us at Hull, and our constant exercise up and down the deck, with icicles dangling from our moustaches, had also done much to make the sound of the meal bell dear to us.

Five or six hours later we parted with our good Captain regretfully. Bergen received us without enthusiasm. A solitary brace of Northmen were on the pier-head to which the steamer had to be cabled. They were not eager to do anything for us—it did not seem the season for travellers, they said. Silly fellows; later, when we talked with patriotic Norwegians on the subject, they took quite the opposite view. "Ah, you do well," they said, "to come to us in winter. It is our best time. In summer it is hot, and we have to work all day and into the night also. But now,

when all is white, and there is not much to do except enjoy ourselves—this is Norway's real holiday time."

Between ourselves, dear reader, the Norwegian's idea of enjoyment is rather a sober one. He is not a demonstrative person. If he is happy, he conceals the fact. Verily, and indeed, I believe it is only to be guessed by the quantity of food he eats and of the beer that he drinks. As this conjecture has been confirmed to me by a native of the land, without a particle of shame in the avowal, I do not so much mind declaring it.

There was one other traveller in the hotel—a gentleman in the concert hall comic line, who had a fortnight's engagement at a Bergen place of entertainment. He was a pleasant young Swede, and told us that Norway is not a country for an artist to make money in. His photographs of himself, as Bismarck, a peasant of Dalecarlia, a Parliament man, a French soldier, and—the rascal!—an English "mees," were sufficiently diverting. He had a very flexible mouth—that was the secret of his gift of impersonation.

Four buxom Norwegian chambermaids looked after us in our hotel, and manifold were the sandwiches they set by the embroidered pillows of our beds when we came in late, after the dining-room stove had died to extinction. From our window—with patent "escape from fire" ropes at the side—we looked at the fine Floiesfjeld hill, which does its best to shelter Bergen to the north. The sun shone on the snow of this hill—at a very late hour in the morning—with beautiful effect the next day.

It was Sunday, and a great procession of blue-eyed womenfolk in black silk head-gear and goloshes passed before our window towards the church. Anon we joined them and entered the building. The air outside was, for Bergen, they told us, surprisingly keen. Inside the church it was warm as a toast. The service was not engrossing, either to us or to the native worshippers. The latter came and went, and seemed to be concerned while in the building chiefly in blowing their noses and smoothing their hair. Still, the Scandinavian ruff to the minister's neck is perennially quaint. It was better to see than the whitewashed walls, the spittoons, and the painted wooden effigy of I know not what Christian symbol by the towering wooden pulpit. In Scandinavia they call their daisies "pastor's ruffs," and it is a very good name for them.

One thing must not be forgotten—the great Christmas fir-tree set in a box in the middle of the church. Yuletide was past, but its festival was still in swing. Wherever we went we saw Christmas-trees ornamented with tinselled trifles, biscuits and sweets, and coloured balls. Norway seemed to owe much of its winter's brightness to them.

Outside the church, and a common adornment of every Norwegian farmhouse, is to be seen a pole with a sheaf of corn tied to the summit. In the towns people tie the sheaves to their window-sills. This takes place when the first autumnal snow falls. Of course, throughout the winter the supply is constantly increased. The Norwegian birds must feel well-disposed towards the Northmen. They show it by the fearless way in which they delve in the snow at your very feet for unconventional provender.

Like the Lutherans elsewhere, the Norwegians enjoy themselves heartily on Sunday afternoon and evening. We climbed the Floiefjeld with a hundred or two of the members of Bergen's "beau monde." There was a deal of adult snow-balling on the way up and down, and more laughter than we heard anywhere else in Norway. This was explainable by the fact that Bergen contains many Germans, who excel the Norwegians in vivacity.

From the top of the hill we looked down upon Bergen's fog, which was bad enough for London town when viewed from the pure heights, with unblemished snow a yard deep all about us and a cloudless blue sky overhead. There is a restaurant on the hill, wherein, on festivals, it is seemly to drink port wine or punch, especially if you are accompanied by lady friends.

But there was little time for dalliance here. The sun seemed to show himself only as a matter of form and to sink behind the hills again almost immediately. Then the cold wind blew keen. Later in the evening snow fell, and the ladies who went to the theatre swathed themselves in woollens. As for my friend and I, we played whist with a gentleman of the ruff-bearing order and another. It would have been indecorous in England thus to sit down to a rubber—with plenty of punch hot close at hand. But the traveller almost of necessity becomes cosmopolitan in his habits. Besides, had we not as an accomplice a Christian minister? As a matter of fact, it was this gentleman who most wished for the game.

Now we had come to Norway primarily to skate; but it was out of the question. Wherever there was ice there was snow, and a great deal of it. Norway is a land for snow-shoeing—skating is a secondary sport with the Norwegians.

We learnt this thoroughly when we set out for our journey to the south. The lakes were fast bound in ice, and had not an inch of their surfaces disclosed. They were an impressive but rather disheartening spectacle; for it was gall and worm-wood to think how merrily we could have gone on our way if an army of sweepers had aided us.

As it was, instead of skating we had to sleigh. For this purpose it behaved us to get fur coats and much else. We went to the furriers' and saw piles of the skins of bear, fox, lynx, sable, mink, otter, and wolf. For ten pounds we could have bought a ducal bear-skin paletot, and a white wolf-skin coat was worth about as much. Wild beasts are getting scarce in Norway nowadays, and very scarce in Sweden, where about a score of bears annually are all that the peasants can get at. But in this warehouse there was no suggestion of such scarcity.

We returned to the hotel, swollen about three-fold, and majestic in mink-skin raiment to our very heels. Also we had top-boots of a leviathan size, adapted to be padded with hay or straw, and to wear over an ordinary pair of boots. With these, sealskin caps to draw to the ears, and gauntlet fur gloves, we were in a condition to challenge even the North Pole to do its worst—at least, so we fancied.

In the face of these unmistakable preparations, it seemed much too bad of the weather to break up suddenly on the Monday night. The streets were then in a vile state, and the rain descended straight and abundantly. We went to the theatre to see a poor little play in a poor little building—hardly any one laughed, although it was a comedy!—and afterwards we retired to our embroidered pillows somewhat out of humour.

But we were told to have patience, and to get out of Bergen and the influence of the Gulf Stream as quickly as possible. This, then, we did on the Tuesday morning, in the midst of a furious storm from the south-west. I thought the wind would blow the little train off the line, and certainly the rain that came with it made the icicles on the mountain-sides look rather belated. The lakes near

Bergen had by no means a winsome appearance under these conditions.

However, we kept up our hopes, and in five hours were rewarded. By that time we had run to the terminus of the Bergen railway, and were about fifty miles inland, by the Lake of Voss. The sky was a cold blue over us, and the snow made our mouths water with delight; it was in the best of conditions for sledging. The postman at the Voss Station—wrapped in furs like a lord, and with a revolver at his waist—told us, with an ironical shrug of the shoulder, that there was quite enough hard snow his way.

Voss looked lovely, with its little gabled wooden chalets deep in snow. Dogs were running about and barking in the snow, and the village children were amusing themselves by shooting down the slopes of the surrounding hills on snowshoes. At the hotel they were agreeably astonished to see us, and only lamented that the weather was so suitable for our progress that they could not conscientiously attempt to detain us.

Norway is not a country famous for its architecture or works of art. That is rather a relief upon the whole. At any rate it gave neither of us a pretext for tarrying in out-of-the-way villages in the course of our journey. Nor, in winter, is it a land for a slow, piecemeal enjoyment of Nature's wonders. You must look about you briskly from the thoroughfares and be satisfied with that. The man who thinks at such a time to climb mountains and get at out-of-the-way waterfalls, might just as well arrange for his funeral off hand. There are an indefinite number of feet of snow on the mountain-sides, and underneath the snow the rocks are mantled with glossy ice, upon which safe foothold is impossible.

We were quite content with our sledges when they came to the hotel door, each drawn by a sturdy little yellow pony, and each with a broad-shouldered lad to ride on the small seat behind. We passengers were telescoped along the middle in an easy attitude, with bear-skins and rugs round our legs and knees. Thus we started, in the presence of half-a-dozen Voss lads, who seemed considerably impressed by the whispered intimation of the hotel waiter that we were bound for Christiania.

Well, the journey took us six days, including one entire night also, and not a few hours which we stole from ether nights,

tempted by the majesty of the moon on the snow-clad mountains and the dark pine forests heavily weighted with snow.

Our first day was the longest of all, seeing that it began at about six o'clock in the morning—in pitchy darkness—and ended, I suppose, at midnight, when we might have been seen strutting up and down the tiny pier of Gudvangen on the magnificent Naero fiord, out of the greater fiord of Sogne. We were then waiting for the mail steamer—a toy vessel about twenty feet long—which was to convey us up the fiord to Laerdalsören. The steamer was hours late, so that we did not get to bed until past five o'clock the following morning. Thus we were in movement very nearly twenty-three hours out of the four-and-twenty.

What memorable sights had we not seen in the interval! The mountains over Gudvangen are reckoned about the grandest anywhere in Norway. We saw them in the starlight. It seems a pity, but I assure you the spectacle even thus was worth viewing. The huge peaks almost hung over us in their precipitousness, and the starlight glittered on the long icicles which clothed their sides. In the summer visitors admire the waterfalls hereabouts. With us they were transformed into prodigious fringes of solid ice.

We had seen the sun set over the mountains behind us, while flying along at a rate of about eight miles an hour. The great white shapes took a faint coral colour, held it for a few minutes, and then became cold white again. The sky was shot with pink and purple clouds for about as long. Afterwards we tightened our fur coats round us and prepared for an arctic hour or two.

And what is more, we had it. The cold was intense in the valleys this night. If we kept our mouths shut for but a minute the icicles had pinned our mouths to the lower part of the face, and it cost us a real painful wrench to break them. On we drove through the cold, with vast snow-clad lakes one after the other by our side, or through the midst of silent forests, beautifully clothed in snow. Though we were snug enough in all the covered parts of the body, somehow this our first day did not quite agree with us. We granted that it was a superb experience; but it made us quite laughably irritable at the station-houses where we paused to get fresh horses and to solace ourselves with hot coffee and

cigarettes. We made one long stay for dinner, when our irritability thawed completely away. But afterwards, when we faced the bitter night again, it again descended upon us. However, by this time we were in the secret, and we did not take umbrage at the manifest tokens by which it declared itself.

Our landlord at the hotel where we slept, after our opening day, whistled when we told him we were going all the way to the capital. But immediately afterwards he looked at our fur coats and seven-league boots.

"Oh, it might not be so bad for you," he said, with a laugh. "You must eat plenty, and you will do."

We had already been warned in Bergen that we ought to drink plenty of spirits—a silly notion. But it was just as well that we took a bottle of cognac with us, for the liquor laws of Scandinavia are tiresome to the stranger. After a long day we asked in vain at our inn for brandy or whisky. They were not licensed to sell such beverages, and they offered us beer instead.

Of other luxuries there was also an absolute dearth in the wayside inns. We had an idea before we started that reindeer was a palatable sort of meat. It did not prove so with us, and yet we could get no other for two days while we were in the uplands, moving ever between mountain tops and along a valley white in every part. They did not serve it in an appetising manner, and seemed to cook it in its own fat, which we were told afterwards was by no means right, since the fat of reindeer is objectionable, even in itself. Still, it kept us alive, and we contrived to get some enjoyment by the way, if only in the interesting variety of post-boys, who helped us from stage to stage.

Of white bread we saw none while we were fed on the reindeer. In the north of the land the honeymoon is called "Hvedebrød dagen," or, "white bread days." We could hardly, therefore, expect this indulgence in winter. In summer, of course, it may well be otherwise, for then visitors are to be seen rattling across the land wherever there is a decent driving road, and their wants have to be attended to.

We did not lose either our ears or our noses. This was no inconsiderable mercy, seeing that both of us carried noses of uncommon dimensions, nor did the cold make us lose our tempers inordinately after the first day or two. We laughed at the mean sort of sledges we had to put up with

in the wilds; at the smoky and unclean interiors of some of the smaller station-houses; at the tough reindeer collars; at our blue noses and the icicles that hung from them; and even at the overturns in the snow which we had to endure in the worst part of the valley.

If we learnt nothing else by this journey, we acquired a respect for the wisdom and intrepidity of the average Norwegian pony that will last long. I wonder how an English horse would have comforted himself when chest-deep in snow—as were our little fellows over and over again. They might very excusably have pitched us neck and crop over precipices more than once or twice. But if they could not help upsetting us—and our luggage—they seemed bent on doing it with the utmost consideration. At times we floundered badly in trying to right ourselves and recover our packages in the drifts. Yet all went well in the end, and on the seventh day, we reached the capital without having lost a single article by the way.

We had the luck in the highest part of the valley—nearly four thousand feet above the sea—to notice a couple of lemmings: those interesting little Norwegian rodents about which so much has been written. One of them stood piteously on its hind paws when I bent down to take it up, and it nipped me smartly with its pretty white teeth for my pains. The poor little fellows were clearly hard up for food. The snow here was tremendous in quantity, and we rode at times over more than twenty feet of it. If the frozen surface had let us through, we should have been in a fine pickle.

The lemmings, like the weasels in Scotland, sometimes march through the land in multitudes, going across water and up mountains with no deviation, and, of course, eating whatever they fancy by the way. The fish take toll of them when they cross the streams, and the reindeer disembowels them with its hoofs on the fjelds. One would be sorry to hear they were extinct—which, however, they are little likely to become.

This lemming day in our tour was the most trying of all. When we had got to the end of it, we were on the downward grade, with Christiania about one hundred and fifty miles away at the sea level. We had got our backs to the cold north, and hoped we had done with piercing snowstorms in our faces, and a thermometer down to zero.

FOR ANGÈLE'S SAKE.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS.

PART II.

"THE other monsieur has been down this two hours or more," said Angèle, as she brought me my coffee at eight o'clock the next morning. "He was at the door when I arrived this morning. He had been for a turn in the forest with the père Rochat, and now he is in the atelier with Franz. He has been praising Franz's work up to the skies. I heard him say he has never seen better wood-carving. For my own part, I think my cousin Jacques Méris is quite as clever. Monsieur Eustace must see Jacques' work. He will probably give him an order, as he has given Franz. He is very rich, is he not, your cousin? Much richer than you, Monsieur Jean? How is it, if you are cousins?"

I explained to her that he was rich and that I was poor because he was the head of the family, and the owner of the family property.

"It is droll," she replied; "here we all share, and I wonder, since Monsieur Eustace seems so generous, that he does not share it with you."

I laughed.

"You do not like him, Monsieur Jean?" she said.

"Why do you suppose that?" I asked.

"I do not suppose it, I know it; I saw it last evening when you met. Yet to look at Monsieur Eustace I should have thought every one would like him. Ah! he is very handsome, and so 'comme il faut.' Why do you not like him, Monsieur Jean?"

"Don't ask foolish questions, Angèle," I replied. "And there is madame calling you."

"Of course she calls me," cried the girl petulantly; "her one thought is to make me work."

After my breakfast I strolled into the atelier. There stood Eustace, as much at home as if he had been born and brought up among Swiss wood-carvers. He had a piece of charcoal in his hand, with which he was rapidly sketching a plan on a large sheet of paper. Franz stood beside him watching, and listening with rapt admiration to his explanations.

"Jack," cried my cousin, as I entered, "what an old dunce you are. You never mentioned in your letters home—Rachel

showed them to me, you know—what a genius inhabited this retired nook. The finding of him is the reward of my magnanimity in my coming to seek you. I am going to get him to do me a whole lot of carving—a cabinet, and some panels, and a chair. I think I've made a great revision of my plans. I shall put off my mountaineering for a while, and I have persuaded the forester to take me 'en pension' for a week or two. I have dabbled in wood-carving myself, and I shall get some real good tips from our friend here."

Franz could hardly wait till this long speech, of which he understood the purport, was finished.

"Ah, Monsieur Jean," he broke in, "I owe all this to you. Monsieur has been looking at my work. He is a real connoisseur. He has given me an order which will occupy me for weeks. It is work which there will be some satisfaction in carrying out, and it will go to London, and who knows what it may not be the beginning of? Besides which, monsieur wants me to give him some lessons in carving, and he offers me a price which I am almost ashamed to accept. It is too liberal. I will go down to the sawmill at once, monsieur," he went on, turning to Eustace. "Méris always keeps some well-seasoned wood on hand, and as he is Angèle's father I——"

He nodded his head, took up his cap, and went out; but before he started for the sawmill we saw him deep in conversation with Angèle, who was shelling peas at the back door.

"That's a most capable young flirt," said Eustace, looking towards them.

"She isn't flirting with Franz, anyway," I replied.

"Isn't she?" he returned drily.

"No," I said; "they are an engaged couple."

"Well, the one thing doesn't put the other out of the question," he said. "She couldn't help flirting if she had to die for it."

"You have not been long in coming to that conclusion," I replied.

"I was not more than ten seconds," he answered carelessly, "and I said to myself at the same time, 'I'll bet any money my humdrum old cousin has let all her little wiles and smiles pass unnoticed.'"

"Ferrier," I exclaimed, "don't talk of the girl in that way. If Franz heard you——"

"But he doesn't hear me," interrupted

Eustace, "and if he did, doesn't he admire her for what she is?"

All that day, and for several days to come, nothing was talked of at La Gaulette but the great good fortune that had fallen to Franz. The neighbours of the scattered forest hamlet heard of it and came to congratulate him, and to stare in wonder at the magnificent sketches which the rich English stranger had given him. Some of them shook their heads.

"I wonder he ventures to begin such a task," they said. "Look at the expense it will be to him for wood if he happens to spoil a panel."

"Spoil a panel," retorted Madame Rochat. "Franz is not that sort. He is too careful; besides, he has a real talent. You will see how he will succeed, and doubtless this order will lead on to another, and he will reach an excellent position—equal to that he has abandoned—and he will be raised above the necessity of doing trivial work for the shops in Lausanne and Montreux."

The forester, too, was sanguine about the future which was opening before his kinsman, while as to Franz, he worked hard from morning till night, in ecstasy at the opportunity of exercising his artistic fancy and building castles in the air, as the groups of leaves and flowers gradually emerged under his skilful touch from the great slabs of wood.

"I shall give Angèle a far handsomer 'corbeille' than I ever dreamt of," he told me; "and the very next time I go to Lausanne I will buy her the silver buckle she has set her heart on. She has so few pretty things, poor child. And we shall be able to have a couple of cows, perhaps, when we are married, instead of the goat we had talked of. As to my English lessons, Monsieur Jean, we must let those rest, for what with giving Monsieur Eustace instruction in carving, and with my own work, I have scarcely time to eat my meals."

But Eustace's enthusiasm as a learner did not last very long. Each day he spent less and less time in the atelier. He wanted to explore the forest thoroughly, he said, and besides, he saw how it hampered Franz to have him pottering about.

"I wish he did not think that," Franz said to me. "It is in reality a pleasure to teach him. He knows so much of our mountains, and he talks to me of them; and he gives me no trouble, he overcomes difficulties almost without an effort."

"He has made a conquest of you, Franz," I said laughing, for the honest fellow spoke quite enthusiastically of Eustace.

"I think he has," replied Franz gravely; "there is something about him which I cannot describe, which it seems to me must make every one like him; and yet, Monsieur Jean," here Franz hesitated, "have you not remarked—or perhaps you would not notice it as I do—Angèle does not seem to like him."

"Why do you think that, Franz?" I asked.

"Well," he replied, lowering his voice, "at first she liked him well enough. She said he was gayer and more friendly than—than you, Monsieur Jean. But now it is quite different. When I speak of him she changes the subject, and when he speaks to her—ever so courteously as his manner is—she only shrugs her shoulders or pouts. Sometimes I have felt quite ashamed for her, but if I mention it she will not hear a word. For myself, I find no fault in him, except that he might stick to his work—I mean to carving—a little more."

The same evening when supper-time came, Eustace had not come in. Madame Rochat grew fidgety for the chickens she had roasted, and like many another careful housewife, she vented her incipient irritation on the most convenient object.

"Hast thou nothing better to do than to stare down the road," she said to Angèle, who stood in the doorway. "No one ever came home the faster for being watched for."

"I'm not watching for him," retorted the girl, wheeling round. "Why do you say I am watching for him?"

"Hoity toity," cried Madame Rochat, not sorry for the diversion, "mayn't a body speak without putting you into a rage?"

Then, to my surprise, Angèle, instead of answering, burst into tears.

"For shame of yourself," went on Madame Rochat, "one would think you were a baby of six years old, instead of a woman on the point of being married. 'Tis a mercy Franz has the temper of an angel."

"Do not speak to me of my marriage," blazed forth the girl afresh; "you know you would be only too glad if it came to nothing."

I felt sadly in the way in my position as spectator of a family quarrel. Just at that

moment Eustace appeared, full of apologies for his want of punctuality.

"Go and bring in the soup, Angèle," said Madame Rochat, "and tell Franz we are going to table."

"Why, Angèle," cried Eustace, as she went across the room, "what is this? you are all in tears. Have you and Franz had a quarrel? What is it all about?"

"You know what it is all about," she said; "why do you ask?"

Eustace looked from one to another with a half amused smile.

"I see," he said, as Angèle went into the kitchen. "I have engrossed too much of the fiancé's time lately, and once or twice she has come and overheard us talking of those mountains of which she is so jealous."

"I am not jealous of the mountains," interrupted Angèle, re-entering from the kitchen, "he may go back to his guides if he likes. I don't care."

She looked defiantly at Madame Rochat as she spoke. Eustace laughed. She turned to him angrily as if she were going to say something further, then setting the soup tureen on the table, she rushed out of the room, and we saw her no more that evening.

That stormy scene seemed to have cleared the atmosphere; the following evening every one was in excellent good humour, and Angèle was quite gentle and meek.

"I have made my peace with her," said Eustace to me as we smoked, "but it was not a very easy matter. The grudge was rooted deeper than I thought."

"And what was the grudge?" I asked.

"Just what I thought," he replied carelessly.

The next day was Sunday. Eustace announced his intention of going to service at the forest church at Montherond, and I went and stretched myself with a book under the great beech-tree in front of the house. Presently I saw Madame Rochat coming toward me, a look of embarrassment on her face.

"Monsieur Jean," she began, "I can speak to you with more ease than I can to your cousin, and what I have to say is a little difficult. We know how rich and generous he is, but still I would rather he did not make such costly presents to any one of our household. I have just seen Angèle on her way to church, she had on a beautiful silver buckle. I asked her how she came by it, for I know Franz had

not yet bought the one he spoke of. At first she would not say, but at last she told me that Monsieur Eustace had given it to her. I felt very much surprised. I do not think she should accept such a beautiful present from any one but Franz. I do not mean," she went on dubiously, "that I think Monsieur Eustace meant anything; but, Monsieur Jean, if you could explain to him that we have other ways here in the forest, perhaps he would not do such a thing again."

"You are quite right, madame," I said.

"I will do as you wish me."

But when I talked the matter over with Eustace he only laughed.

"Why, that was my peace-offering," he said, "and the little goose was so proud of it she was obliged to parade it on the very first opportunity."

Somehow or other he made it all right with Madame Rochat, so that her scruples vanished, or at least she did not mention them again. As to Franz, he was almost as proud of the buckle as Angèle herself.

"I shall get her a chain to wear with it," he said, "and we will call the buckle Monsieur Eustace's 'cadeau de nocces.'"

In the course of that week I left La Gaulette. The leave-taking was very affectionate all round. Madame Rochat asked my permission to embrace me. I had reminded her so often of her absent son, she said. The forester gave me a handshake which I felt for half an hour afterwards.

"You will come and see us again some day, Monsieur Jean," he said; "remember we have not yet shown you the Tour de la Reine Berthe."

"Some day," repeated Franz, who was waiting to accompany me to the diligence. "Why, Monsieur Jean has promised to visit us—Angèle and me—next summer without fail. Have you not, Monsieur Jean?"

Yes, I said, I had promised, and I should look forward to my visit with pleasure. Then I made a little speech chiefly for Angèle's benefit, hoping they would be very happy. She lowered her eyes, and made no response.

"Hast thou nothing to say to monsieur for all his good wishes?" said the forester.

Still she did not speak.

"Monsieur Jean understands," said Franz gaily; and all the way through the forest he talked of the happiness that was in store for them both; it would be so good

for her, he said, to be happy after her hard girlhood.

At the Chalet à Gobet he left me. The diligence was not yet due, and time was precious to him. I sat down on the bench outside the quaint old inn, and watched him disappear among the dark pines. Two peasant women met him, greeted him, and then came on and sat down beside me. They were talking volubly, and I heard Franz's name mentioned several times—then Angèle's. I began to listen.

"I tell thee," said the one vehemently, "that she doesn't care a rap for him. All she wants is to marry and get away from her stepmother."

"Nonsense," replied her companion, "I don't believe it. Half the girls about lost their hearts to him when he came here. She's got the finest lover in the Jorat; of course she cares for him, 'tis only natural."

"I tell thee," persisted the other, "that she jilted her cousin Jacques Méris for Lehmann, and she'll jilt Lehmann if any one better comes by."

"But no one better will come by."

The first speaker nodded her head and looked wise.

"I could tell thee things," she said; "things I've seen lately. I've half a mind to speak to Lehmann myself."

"Thou hadst better mind thy own business," said the other woman. "Why shouldst thou spoil the girl's chance in life?"

"She'll spoil it herself if she doesn't mind. I know my own know. Ah, there comes the diligence. Mon Dieu! what a dust."

Little as I cared for Angèle Méris, I felt glad to think that her lover trusted her and had faith in the germ of good in her.

After my return to London I heard from Franz once or twice. Monsieur Eustace, he told me, had left them for the Tyrol after a stay of two months. The carving was finished and despatched to London. He was well pleased with it himself, so were many others who had seen it. Monsieur Eustace had scarcely carved at all after I went. I must tell him particularly what I thought of the panel with

the peacock's feathers on—that had been the most trouble.

Then our correspondence broke down. I had plenty to think of at home. Eustace Ferrier went down to Shropshire for the shooting, and then again for the Christmas balls, and each time I heard that he had been a constant visitor at my mother's house.

"I think Rachel is fretting a little about something," my mother wrote to me, "but she is not very communicative just now." In the following sentence she told me that Eustace Ferrier had gone to Nice for the rest of the winter.

The next I heard of my cousin was that he was engaged to be married to an American heiress whom he had met at Monte Carlo.

"I detest American girls," said my mother. "I know she has hooked him in."

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